

## **SPECIALIZED FOSTER CARE**

Children's Division also administers a Specialized Foster Care Program. This program addresses the needs of two distinct groups of children who would otherwise require institutional care, in order to meet their needs. The Medical Foster Care (MFC) Program was established to provide care and treatment to a foster child with acute medical problems or severe physical/mental disabilities. The intent of this program is to assure that a child is cared for in the most appropriate and least restrictive setting. The program will assist the special needs child to reach a goal of permanency, and serve his/her special needs and best interests. Through MFC, the Division is able to prevent the institutionalization of children who require the services of this nature. The medical foster care parent receives child specific training and instruction by the medical and mental health professionals attending the child. This training is in addition to required training for foster parents. Children's Division has 344 active medical foster homes. As of February 28, 2005, 164 children were being served in the MFC program.

Behavioral Foster Care (BFC) is a specialized foster family placement program designed for children suffering moderate to severe behavior problems. These children require a family setting that can provide greater structure and supervision than normal. These Children have experienced multiple placements due to their unacceptable behavior and/or uncontrollable behavior in previous unspecialized out-of-home care placements. This program is also responsive to children who are located in residential facilities and psychiatric hospitals due to moderate to severe behavior problems and who require a very structured family setting. A goal of the BFC program is to provide children with moderate to severe behavior problems with an individualized, consistent, structured family setting in which they can learn to control behaviors which prohibit their being able to function in a normal home setting and in society.

BFC is not meant to replace appropriate residential treatment placement, however, it is intended to provide an out-of-home alternative to residential treatment for children experiencing moderate to severe behavioral problems. BFC foster parents have received specific pre-service training to enable them to work with a child needing this level of care. The number of children placed within their homes is restricted to allow more individual time for BFC children. The Division has 660 active homes that have been approved to provide BFC. As of February 28, 2005, there were 584 children in this type of placement.

Specialized foster care parents are reimbursed at the rate of \$657 per month for their involvement. The higher monthly payment is justified by the fact that more foster parent time and attention is given to these children than a child of the age without such special needs. BFC parents can also receive an additional \$100

per month to implement an incentive/reinforcement program for the child as well as an additional \$100.00 per month professional parenting.

In SFY 2003, foster care expenditures, which include specialized foster care, were \$50,282,000 with a monthly average of 8,152 children. In SFY 2004, the expenditure was \$52,374,110 and served 7,605 children. The projected expenditure for SFY 2005 is \$50,453,591, with a projected number of children of 7,440.